(b) Certain amendments to Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 are under consideration.

Delhi-Badrinath Road as National Highway

3524. SHRI SHANTI TYAGI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to declare the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut-Haridwar-Rishikesh-Joshimath-Badrinath road as a National Highway; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Due to limited allocation made available for National Highways in the 8th Plan, it is difficult at this stage to declare any new National Highways.

Permission to Sell Vessels by the Hindustan Shipyard Ltd.

3525. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have permitted the Hindustan Shipyard Ltd. to sell 3 vessels at the market rate;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that SCICI refused to extend concessional rate of interest to Hindustan Shipyard Ltd; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The following 3 bulk carriers ordered by Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) are under construction in HSL:—

(i) One bulk carrier of 27,000 DWT.

(ii) Two bulk carriers of 42,750 DWT each.

The above vessels were permitted to be sold by open tender at a reserve price of Rs. 50 crores for the first vessel and Rs. 60 crores each for the other two vessels. It was also directed that M/s Shipping Corporation of India who had placed orders for these vessels, should be given the option to participate in the tender and also to match the highest offer.

(c) and (d) Hindustan Shipyard Limited has not approached SCICI to extend concessional rate of interest to Hindustan Shipyard Limited.

Airconditioned Buses from Delhi Airport to Punjab

3526. SHRI JAGIR SINGH DARD: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have cleared any proposal for starting airconditioned buses to carry passengers straight from Delhi Airport to Ludhiana and Jalandhar in Punjab; and

(b) if so, by when such buses are likely to be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Accident Prone Portions of National Highway Grid

3527. SHRI GOPALSINH G. SOLANKI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether some portions of the National Highway grid have been declared as accident prone areas or death traps;

(b) if so, the details thereof perticularly in Gujarat, District-wise; and

(c) the causes of accidents on these